

In the Claims

Please cancel claims 1-33 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please add new claims 34 - 41 as follows:

- Sub  
By
- A2
- 34.(New) A stent having a first end, an opposing second end, and a longitudinal length, the stent having a diameter throughout its length and comprising:  
a plurality of annular elements, each annular element having a compressed state and an expanded state; and  
at least a portion of the stent having a tapered configuration in the expanded state; wherein the first and second ends have different degrees of flexibility.
- 35.(New) The stent of claim 34, wherein each annular element comprises a plurality of alternating struts and apices connected to each other to form a substantially annular configuration, and wherein the stent further includes connecting members that are connected to the apices of the adjacent annular members.
- 36.(New) ~~The stent of claim 35 wherein all the struts in the stent have the same length in the expanded state.~~
- 37.(New) The stent of claim 34 wherein the diameter of the stent increases from a first diameter at the first end to a second greater diameter at the second end.
- 38.(New) The stent of claim 34 wherein the diameter of the stent continuously increases from a first diameter at the first end to a second greater diameter at the second end.
- 39.(New) A stent having an unexpanded state and an expanded state, the stent having a first end, an opposing second end, and a longitudinal length, the stent having a diameter throughout its length and comprising: